

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2793

As Amended by the Senate:

Title: An act relating to implementation of Referendum Bill No. 45 by the fish and wildlife commission.

Brief Description: Providing for implementation of Referendum 45.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Fuhrman, Jacobsen, Basich, Thompson, Grant and L. Thomas).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/31/96, 2/2/96 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/96, 98-0.

Senate Amended.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Elliot; Hatfield; Jacobsen; Keiser; Sheldon; B. Thomas and Thompson.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: With the passage of Referendum 45 in the November 1995 general election, voters turned over primary control of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The referendum takes effect July 1, 1996. This is the same date by which the commission is to report to the Legislature on the statutory changes necessary to implement the referendum fully. These proposed changes could then be considered during the 1997 legislative session. However, if specific changes are desired prior to the July 1, 1996, referendum effective date, these changes must be addressed during the 1996 legislative session.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature begins to make the statutory changes necessary to fully implement Referendum 45, including implementation of the Fish and Wildlife Commission's expanded rule-making responsibilities. One statute from the 1993 merger bill regarding the appointment of the director by the Governor is repealed.

Two statutes describing duties of the director are amended to reflect the commission's responsibility for determining the director's duties. In a number of places in the Fisheries Code, references to "rules of the director" are replaced with "rules of the department."

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S): The Senate amendment adds a section to the bill, which amends a provision that was overlooked in the 1993 legislation merging the departments of Fisheries and Wildlife. The section provides that approval of a majority of, rather than four, Fish and Wildlife Commission members is required for adoption of permanent and emergency rules.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill would take effect on July 1, 1996.

Testimony For: The assistant attorney general is looking over all the needed statutory changes. We are pressing forward and need to proceed with this bill. We appreciate your making this vehicle available for us.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mitch Johnson, Fish and Wildlife Commission (pro).